

Allison's Gap Wastewater Project

Service Commencement for Allison's Gap Wastewater Project

Saltville, Virginia

May 16, 2005

Today I am pleased to join with Smyth County residents in celebrating the commencement of new public wastewater service for residents of the Allison's Gap community, the doubling of the Town of Saltville's wastewater treatment capacity and significantly improved sewer service for residents of the McHenry community. This project is one of the largest federally funded infrastructure projects in the recent history of our region.

Beginning today, 275 households, ten business and several churches in the Allison's Gap community will for the first time receive publicly provided wastewater service. In addition, 43 households in the McHenry community will today begin receiving improved public sewer service, and the greatly expanded capacity of Saltville's sewer treatment system will enable residential, commercial and industrial growth in and around the town.

The success which we are celebrating today began in 2001 when I requested a special federal appropriation for the Allison's Gap wastewater project. The U.S. Congress approved my request, and in November of that year I announced an appropriation in the amount of \$654,750. That same year, I also announced the provision of \$1,000,000 in federal funding from the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development.

The following year, the U.S. Department of Agriculture, through its Rural Development Agency, allocated a total of \$4,735,000 in federal funding to the project at my urging. Of that total amount, \$2,000,000 has been provided in the form of a federal grant, and \$2,735,000 has been provided as a low-interest federal loan.

In 2004, I was pleased to announce further federal support for the project. USDA's Rural Development Agency approved during the course of that year a total of four provisions of federal funding, including \$1,200,700 in low-interest federal loans and a federal grant in the amount of \$500,000.

In total, the federal government has provided all but \$100,000 of the more than \$8 million cost of the Allison's Gap wastewater project.

56,600 feet of new sewer lines leading from the Town of Saltville to the Allison's Gap community have been installed. The lines have been placed along Allison Gap Road, Lick Skillet Road, Poor Valley Road, Cardwell Town Road and Route 91. In addition, the Town of Saltville has expanded the capacity of its wastewater treatment plant from 500,000 gallons per day to 990,000 gallons per day. The Town will use the expanded capacity to treat the wastewater from the Allison's Gap community while Smyth County will maintain the sewer lines.

Using a portion of the funding provided, the Town of Saltville has also installed new sewer lines along McHenry's Creek to replace aging lines that were allowing creek water into the sewer system and resulting in overflows at Saltville's wastewater treatment facility. The new wastewater lines will improve the wastewater service for 43 homes in the McHenry area and relieve the undue stress to the entire Saltville wastewater system caused by the leaks in the aging lines. The Town of Saltville will maintain the upgraded sewer lines in the McHenry's Creek area.

I would like to take the opportunity of these remarks to recognize several of the individuals who have been instrumental in the success of the Allison's Gap wastewater project.

Charlie Clark, Chairman of the Smyth County Board of Supervisors; other members of the Board; former Saltville Mayor T. Bone Lewis; current Mayor Jeffrey Campbell; and members of the Saltville Town Council deserve our thanks for their leadership in the effort to bring public wastewater service to the Allison's Gap community and to improve the sewer service provided to the residents of the McHenry area.

I also want to thank members of the Allison's Gap Sewer Committee for their dedication in making public sewer service for Allison's Gap a reality.

Toby Boian, Deputy Director of Planning and Programming for the Mount Rogers Planning District Commission and the rest of the staff at the PDC also deserve our recognition for their assistance with this project. I want to thank everyone at the PDC for their continued commitment to the needs of Smyth County residents.

Chip Worley and his staff at Anderson and Associates are to be comended for lending their engineering and design expertise.

Finally, I want to thank my District Administrator, Laura Lee, and my new Project Manager, Courtney Lamie, for their persistent and persuasive work in achieving this success. Their outstanding work has substantially contributed to the success that we celebrate today.

Today's ceremony is an example of what can be achieved when citizens and government officials at the local, state and federal levels work together in aid of a common purpose. For that cooperation and successful work in providing public safe and reliable wastewater service for the residents of Allison's Gap and McHenry's Creek, I want to commend everyone here and offer special congratulations to the residents and business owners who will be receiving this vital new service.